

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 COLOMB 03599 241241Z

41

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
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R 240940Z SEP 76  
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5866

CONFIDENTIAL COLOMBO 3599

STADIS//////////

EXDIS

FOR KUX FROM DCM

E.O. 11652:GDS  
TAGS: OGEN, CE  
SUBJECT: TITLE I PROGRAM

REF: STATE 235102 (STADIS)

1. REFTEL MOST ENCOURAGING NEWS. IN ABSENCE OF AMBASSADOR, WHO IS IN JAFFNA FOR USIS EXHIBIT OPENING, AND SUBJECT TO HIS COMMENT ON HIS RETURN, AND IN LIGHT OF PRIME MINISTER'S IMMINENT DEPARTURE ON SEPTEMBER 26 FOR NEW YORK, WOULD LIKE TO MAKE THIS SUGGESTION:

2. PROGRAM OF ORDER OF MAGNITUDE DESCRIBED REFTEL IS RATHER SHARP DEPARTURE FROM RECENT PL 480 LEVELS. IN FACT, WITH ADDITION OF RICE COMPONENT, WE ARE UNDOUBTEDLY SPEAKING OF LEVEL MORE THAN DOUBLE THAT OF LAST YEAR, PERHAPS ULTIMATELY AMOUNTING TO SOME \$50-60 MILLION. FOR THIS SORT OF INPUT, BELIEVE USG SHOULD SEEK TO MAXIMIZE OUR MILEAGE WITH THE GSL.

3. PL 480 DISCUSSIONS ARE HELD WITH EXTERNAL RESOURCES DIVISION, PART OF MINISTRY OF PLANNING, OF WHICH MINISTER IS PRIME MINISTER BANDARANAIKE. RATHER THAN HAVE US ULTIMATELY AND GRADUALLY DISCLOSE OUR CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 COLOMB 03599 241241Z

THINKING ON THIS SUBJECT TO RELATIVELY LOW-RANKING

OFFICIALS AT WORKING LEVEL, WOULD RECOMMEND THAT  
CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO HAVING PRIME MINISTER PERSONALLY  
BE THE ONE TO RECEIVE THE NEWS, PERHAPS DURING A  
NEW YORK MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY, SHOULD ONE TAKE  
PLACE. IF THIS IS NOT FEASIBLE, AMBASSADOR MIGHT  
INFORM ACTING PRIME MINISTER SENANAYAKE IN HER ABSENCE.

4. IN ADDITION TO MEETING VERY REAL SRI LANKAN NEEDS,  
EXACERBATED BY DROUGHT SITUATION, EFFECT OF THIS PROGRAM  
WILL BE GREAT BOOST TO COUNTRY'S BALANCE OF PAYMENTS  
SITUATION, ESPECIALLY ON THE EVE OF ELECTION PERIOD.  
IN FACT, NEWS OF THIS NATURE MIGHT FIGURE INTO PRIME  
MINISTER'S CALCULATIONS ON PLANNING FOR ELECTIONS  
(COLOMBO 3518). BELIEVE ALSO THAT IT IS IMPORTANT IN  
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER OR OTHER  
GSL OFFICIALS, TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM  
IS NOT TO BE TAKEN AS ANY COMMITMENT TO A LIKE AMOUNT  
IN SUCCEEDING YEARS, BUT THAT EACH WILL HAVE TO BE  
TAKEN AS IT COMES.

5. WOULD ALSO LIKE TO MAKE POINT THAT GSL OFFICIALS  
HAVE BEEN TALKING 10,000 TONS OF RICE, NOT RPT NOT  
20,000. THE SECOND 10,000 TONS OF RICE MIGHT WELL  
END UP AS BARGAINING CHIP FOR SECOND 100,000 OF WHEAT  
FLOUR. UNLESS, OF COURSE, THE PRIME MINISTER HERSELF  
PASSES DOWN THE WORD. OTHERWISE, WASHINGTON AGENCIES  
MIGHT BE PREPARED FOR SOME NEGOTIATIONS OVER RICE AMOUNT.  
REED

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